

# Welcome to J.C. Phillips Nature Preserve

## History

The J.C. Phillips Nature Preserve consists of about 85 acres acquired by the city of Beverly in 1987.

The human history of the Phillips Nature Preserve is linked to that of Moraine Farm, which bounds the property to the southeast. The John Phillips house at Moraine Farm was built in 1882, and the landscape design, created by Frederick Law Olmsted, included part of the Phillips estate. Olmsted’s original carriage path along the lake is now part of the trail system of the preserve.

Phillips was involved in the shipping business, later forming the shipping firm of John C. Phillips and Co. He died in Boston on March 1, 1885. His son, William Phillips, was born May 30, 1878, on Moraine Farm. William Phillips’ home, Highover, was built in 1913 on Prospect Hill in the center of what is now the Nature Preserve. The house was destroyed by fire on October 11, 1968, but the remains can still be seen at the top of the hill.

## Natural Features

A glacially formed hill and Wenham Lake are two striking natural features of the John C. Phillips Nature Preserve. The narrow, winding, steep-sided ridge that borders part of the lake is an esker. This type of geological formation is created from sand and cobbles deposited by a river flowing under a melting glacier. The esker here was formed about 15 - 20,000 years ago.

In addition to being the water supply for Beverly and Salem, Wenham Lake is also a habitat for waterfowl and waders, such as ducks, geese, sandpipers, herons, and egrets. Bald eagles have also been spotted on the lake. Common trees in the forest are white pine, Canadian hemlock, and oaks. The understory sports one of the richest assortment of wildflowers in Beverly, including Maple-Leafed Viburnum, Pink Lady’s Slipper, Partridgeberry, Flowering Wintergreen, Canada Mayflower, Solomon’s Seal, Indian Cucumber Root, and Baneberry.

## Wenham Lake

Wenham Lake borders the Phillips Nature Preserve to the east. Its greatest depth is 49 ft., and it encompasses a surface area of 250.6 acres. Ninety-eight acres lay in Beverly, 152.6 acres in Wenham. The total watershed area of the lake, including the lake itself, is 2,250 acres. The lake is fed by springs.

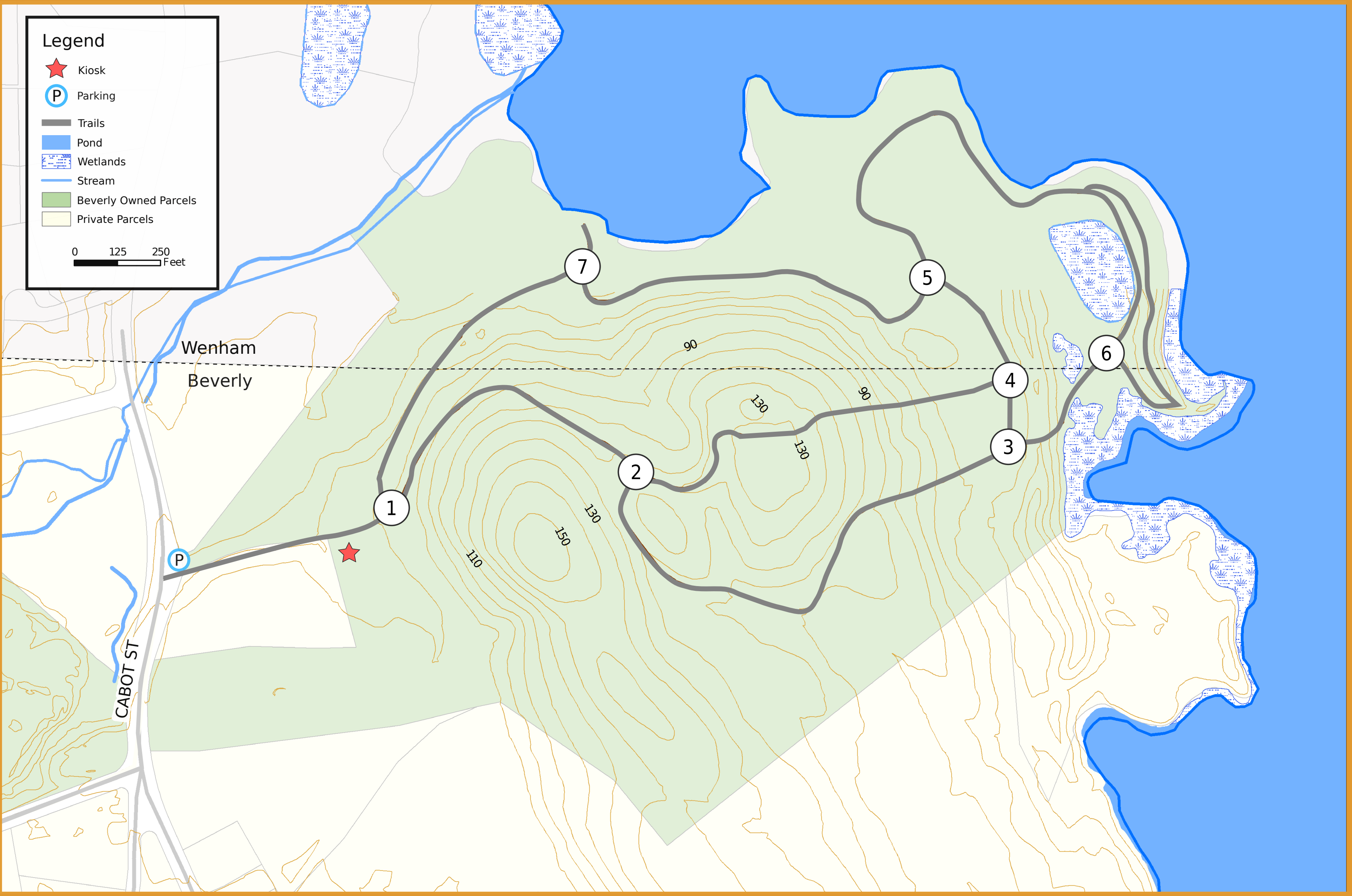
For the first two centuries after European settlement, alewives were harvested from the lake for food and fertilizer. By 1798, the alewife run was declining, and the town of Wenham acted to clear obstructions to the lake to help the annual migration. In the 19th century, the lake was stocked with land-locked salmon, white perch, and black bass. By the end of the 19th century, the alewives had become a “nuisance,” and the Massachusetts Legislature authorized the city of Salem to build structures to block the migration of alewives into the lake in 1891.

Wenham Lake is perhaps most famous historically for its ice harvesting and exporting industry. This occurred from as early as 1805 up until the last of the icehouses burned down in 1935. Two of the larger icehouses could house up to 14,000 tons of ice. the ice was packed in straw and shipped to Boston, then by ship around the world.

The lake now serves as the main public water supply for the cities of Salem and Beverly and is administered by the Salem-Beverly Water Supply Board. In 1894, the lake was connected to Longham Reservoir, and in 1910 - 1911, a canal was dug to connect the lake to the Ipswich River.

## Acknowledgements

The 2019 Kiosk and Wayfinding Sign Update Project was generously funded by a grant from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Recreational Trails Program in collaboration with the City of Beverly and Open Space and Recreation Committee volunteers.



Opossum



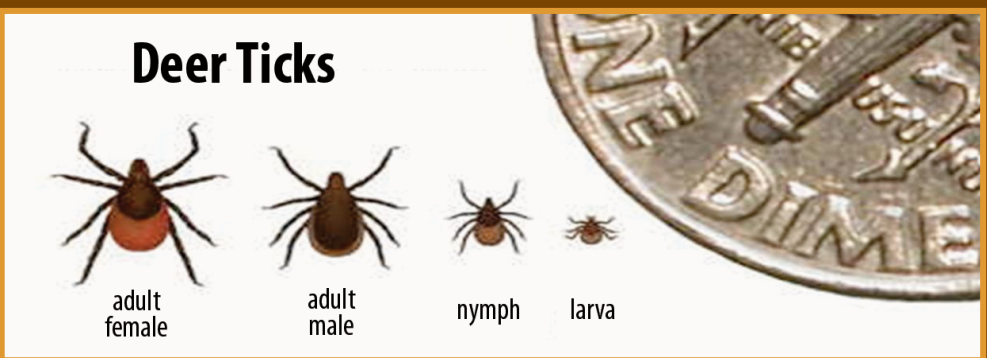
Starflower



Siberian squill



Wood frog



**WARNING**

Deer ticks, which can carry Lyme Disease, are found in this preserve. Take precautions to minimize contact: stay on trails and perform a full-body tick check at the end of your walk. Also check your children and pets.